

CENTRAL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

Tuesday, March 13, 2018
Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue
Fort Smith, Arkansas
3rd Floor

Meeting Minutes

The Fort Smith Central Business Improvement District Commission's regular meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 in the 7th floor board room of the Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Richard Griffin, Chairperson, at 9:34 a.m. and a quorum was noted present. Also in attendance were commissioners Phil White, Lee Ann Vick, Steve Clark, Bill Hanna, Sam Sicard, Rodney Ghan and Jeff Pryor. Others in attendance included Doug Reinert and Jeff Dingman of the City of Fort Smith.

Mr. Sicard moved approval of the minutes of the February 20, 2018 regular meeting. Mr. Ghan seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The commissioners considered the Treasurer's report for the month of February 2018, such documents being previously provided by Mr. Sicard for the commissioners' review. As of February 28, 2018, the Total Cash-on-Hand for the CBID amounted to \$90,333.39. Restricted funds comprise \$23,439.90 of the total cash. The total cash net of restricted funds amounted to \$66,893.49. Mr. Pryor moved approval of the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Ghan seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The Commission reviewed the Neighborhood Services report, CBID Business License Report, and Open Permit reports regarding activity in the CBID through the month of February. Mr. Dingman reported that the CBID's action from the February meeting to ask the Chief of Police to find funding in the department's budget to fund foot patrol beats in downtown Fort Smith was forwarded to City Administrator Geffken and Chief Clark. Chief Clark responded that one of the Fort Smith Police Department's goals for 2018 is to place staffing downtown on bicycles as resources allow for the hiring/training of additional officers, but there is no specific timeframe associated with that action. Chief Clark further advised that in the meantime, the FSPD will continue to provide the most coverage possible based on available resources. Mrs. Vick shared that she has seen the motor patrol officers downtown running traffic enforcement.

Doug Reinert, Director of Parks & Recreation provided an update on projects. It is spring time, so the Parks staff is busy readying facilities for warmer weather. The Greg Smith River Trail Phase III continues to near completion, but weather delays and permitting delays from the USACE has extended the completion date, now expected to be around the end of May. The skate park project is progressing, with a Notice to Proceed on the site work expected to be issued this week so construction can start as soon as next week. Mr. Hanna said that he noticed the big flag had been removed from the pole. Mr. Reinert replied that was due to one of the lights being damaged during some site testing, and it was not repaired in anticipation of the upcoming construction project, so the flag was taken down since it would not be properly lit at night.

Mr. Reinert added that there will be activities in Creekmore Park for Spring Break next week, including the operation of the park train. The staff is cleaning up and readying the splash pads for opening. Another project that has started is the evaluation of the banner signs downtown, as the metal signs are expensive and cumbersome to manage. Working with the Downtown Merchants Association, the Parks staff will evaluate fabric banner options for Garrison Avenue.

Mr. Griffin introduced the first item of business, the review of a renovation plan including window replacement for the Riverfront Inn building at 1021 Garrison Avenue. Mr. Jaydev Patel, the owner of the property, shared his proposal to renovate the two motel buildings by replacing windows and doors for energy efficiency and sound buffering, as well as painting the building, trim, and rails in colors fitting the Red Roof Inn franchise color scheme, as the business intends to affiliate with that brand. Room interiors are also getting an upgrade as part of the renovation.

The proposed replacement windows will replace the large window openings with a smaller, energy efficient window that provides better buffering of outside noise. Mr. White asked about the sketch provided. Mr. Patel shared that as the new window will not fill the entire original opening, Mr. Patel intends to fill in the remaining gap with wood framing and stucco material. Mr. Ghan asked to clarify if it would be a concrete-based stucco material or a foam-based EIFS material, and if it would be done on both buildings. Mr. Patel replied that it would be a concrete-based stucco material and would indeed be applied to both buildings. The stucco would be colored to match the SW 6142 “Macadamia” provided on the color palette provided for review. Mr. White asked if Mr. Patel intended to paint all of both buildings, including the solid masonry end-cap walls. Mr. Patel indicated that they would paint the entirety of both buildings in the “Macadamia” color, would paint the new faux six-panel doors and the (currently blue) roof trim the SW 2802 “Rockwood Red” and the handrails and other trim in SW 6076 “Turkish Coffee” brown.

Mr. Ghan asked Mr. Patel his plan for the wooden privacy fencing, acknowledging that he owns the property next to the hotel. Mr. Patel indicated he planned to repair the fencing and keep it in good order. Mr. Ghan shared that he intends to landscape his adjacent property, including trees, and would like to speak with Mr. Patel further about how they might further discuss coordination of landscaping. Mr. Ghan asked Mr. Dingman about the regulations regarding waste container enclosures and landscaping requirements, to which Mr. Dingman replied that Mr. Patel would be advised of the appropriate regulations by the Planning Department, and if any variance from those is sought, they would have to come back before the CBID for consideration. Mr. Patel further indicated he intends to freshen the landscaping on the property to comply with the Red Roof Inn brand requirements.

Mr. Clark moved approval of the renovation plans for 1021 Garrison, provided that the end-cap walls be painted to match the stucco color, that concrete-based stucco material be used to fill window openings, that the colors are the ones indicated in the proposal, and that the appropriate city regulations regarding waste container enclosures and landscaping be followed. Mr. White seconded, and the motion carried with eight in favor, zero opposed.

Mr. Griffin introduced Mr. Sean Boyd of ABC Printing and Signs to address the next two items of business. Both projects include the use of plastic substrate in business signs at two different properties, which is not permitted according to the CBID design guidelines, so a variance is required. Both signs are for clinics affiliated with Sparks hospital and meet all other sign regulations.

The CBID considered a variance for a plastic substrate sign at 624 Towson Avenue, property in which Mr. Griffin has an ownership interest. Mr. Hanna moved approval of the variance. Mrs.

Vick seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of seven in favor, zero opposed, with Mr. Griffin abstaining.

The CBID considered a variance for a plastic substrate sign at 520 Towson Avenue, property in which Mr. Ghan has an ownership interest. Mr. White moved approval of the variance. Mr. Hanna seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of seven in favor, zero opposed, with Mr. Ghan abstaining.

Mr. Griffin noted that the Planning Department provided notice that work on the Form Based Code is scheduled to kick off with stakeholder meetings on March 29, and further public input opportunities thereafter. An extension of the Propelling Downtown Forward plan, using the Form Based Code will help redefine what type of redevelopment fits in the various sections of the CBID, including the Garrison Avenue Historic District, Towson Avenue, the Warehouse District, and the Riverfront portion, all of which have different design needs. All are encouraged to participate in those discussions.

Mr. White inquired as to the list of the various projects the CBID has considered, which was to be shared with the commissioners after the February meeting. It was not but will be forwarded by Mr. Dingman to all for evaluation and further future discussion of which projects the CBID can take on. Mr. White shared that he would prefer that the CBID select some of those projects to get accomplished.

Mr. Griffin shared that he has had a long tenure (approximately ten years) as chair of the CBID Commission, and has decided that, while he intends to stay an active member of the commission, perhaps it is time for the commission to consider appointing a different chair. There are currently no provisions that state how long a chair should serve in that capacity, and Mr. Griffin reiterated that he has no specific reason for stepping down other than to share the leadership opportunity with one of his fellow commissioners. Mr. White, currently serving as vice-chair, indicated that he would prefer to remain as vice-chair and not assume the role as chair. While not for action at this meeting, commissioners were asked to consider who might serve in that capacity, and the discussion and appointment of a new chair would be placed on the agenda for the next CBID meeting.

The next meeting of the CBID Commission is scheduled for April 17, 2018. There being no additional business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Dingman
Deputy City Administrator